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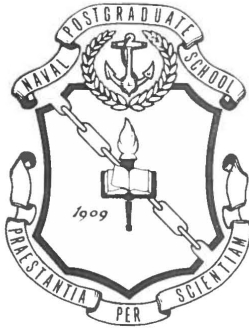
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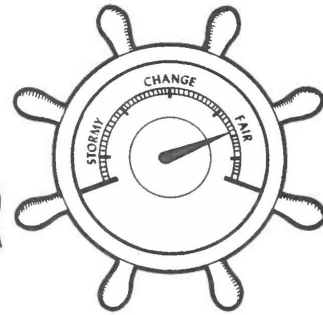
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# *The* BAROMETER



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SMC #2034

The BAROMETER is a student newspaper for the exchange of ideas and information concerning the development and improvement of the professional environment at NPS and within the U. S. Navy.

OFFICERS, FACULTY, STAFF and WIVES  
are invited to contribute articles  
of interest to the BAROMETER,  
c/o The Editor.

LETTER TO EDITOR: (Prof. T. H. Gawain, Aero.)

The recent poll on the grading system at NPS reflects credit on all concerned: On the Student Council, the students, the academic council and the Barometer, all of whom played essential roles in the process. The resulting improvements in the grading plan finally agreed upon are very significant. They would not have been adopted without the benefit of the student poll! This result confirms the wisdom of the Academic Council's decision to open this important subject to full student participation.

In the Barometer's recent account of the poll, it was stated that a majority of the faculty are opposed to the operational grading plan now being tested in the Aero Department. This is perhaps misleading. Actually, while the majority did not favor the active participation of their own departments in the test, they did approve the trial by the Department of Aeronautics. Members of the Academic Council also cooperated in setting up appropriate conditions for the pilot study.

It is true, of course, that many faculty members are not yet convinced about the merits of the operational plan for school wide use. Moreover, despite our best efforts, it has not been possible so far to dispel the many mis-conceptions that have arisen about the operational system.

Since students must bear the brunt of inequities in the grading system, it is not surprising that they are more keenly aware of the faults of the system hitherto used at NPS than are some of the faculty. The students are clearly eager to have their performance evaluated according to a rationale which is straightforward, consistent and fair. It is therefore very significant that they have now come out decisively in favor of the operational plan and against any wholesale proliferation of meaningless grade distinctions. The students at this school are exceptional in their maturity and sense of responsibility. I trust the faculty realizes this and will consequently place great weight on the students' view which has now been so clearly expressed in the poll.

Faculty opinion is itself in a state of evolution. As evidence of this, consider the recent adoption of pass/fail grading for certain courses. This is clearly a step forward. Yet not so long ago such a step would have been unthinkable! As a result of the constructive dialogue that has been in progress on this campus for some time, people are now more willing to consider such ideas on their individual merits. That's why I hope it will still prove true of the operational grading system that it represents an idea whose time has come.

EDITORIAL NOTE:

The Barometer would like to join Professor Gawain in commenting on the effort of the Student Council and the Academic Council. The members of the Nucleus of the Student Council were barely into their deliberations over the job the Student Council was to do when they recognized a subject which needed their attention. At a time when most of the students had not heard of a plus-minus system, the members of the student council were attempting to communicate with the Academic Council about the subject. This communication eventually resulted in the student referendum which provided a student comment on the relative desirability of the A-B-C and Plus-Minus Systems. The Student Council believed in the worthwhileness of providing the Academic Council with this comment when some were saying that the referendum was a meaningless exercise. The Academic Council has shown by their recent decision concerning the Plus-Minus System (promulgated separately to the Student Body) that they were interested in and willing to consider the student feeling upon this matter. The Academic Council is to be congratulated upon their willingness to communicate and upon their final decision to conduct the trial of the Plus-Minus System without prejudice to the student. After all it seems they have reached a method of trying to better evaluate the performance of the student.

Z-GRAM QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS:

In a previous issue the results were listed for the multiple choice portion of the Barometer Z-Gram Questionnaire. The open-ended questions in that questionnaire were intended to allow the individual to make his opinion known without being bound by the pre-structured, multiple-choice. In this and subsequent issues the responses to open-ended questions will be examined and selective examples quoted. Because some of the replies were signed and some were not, the authors names (where known) will be omitted for all. Because the rank of the author often helps explain the comment, the rank will be given with each response.

The first question was the following:

"What is your overall general reaction to the Z-grams" What do you feel the results of these programs will be, and what implications will they have on policies in other areas?"

Some of the answers:

(LCDR) I feel the overall effect will be good but will take a few years of "wearing" to really show effectiveness. The changes made by Z-grams needed to be made and the publicity gained from the dramatic "do it all now" concept certainly hasn't hurt the Navy. I hope officers at lower levels will eventually pickup the ball and follow through with subsequent changes.

(LT) They are a step in the right direction; however, they can't change the person himself. Regardless of whether he agrees with the changes or not, he must be willing to work within them.

(LT) The Z-grams are a move in the right direction but are not or should not be considered an end in themselves. They indicate an apparent willingness to make the changes that may improve the Navy. The results will depend upon acceptance of the changes, recognition of their spirit and intent, and responsible enforcement of the policies. They are partial answers to the Navy's problems and not more.

(LT) My reaction to the Z-grams is whole-hearted support. Major directives from above were the only way to improve the total climate of the Navy. Incidentally this was one of the reasons I stayed in the Navy: There was innovation to deal with problems rather than inertia.

(LCDR) My general reaction to Z-grams is that they represent an encouraging trend towards modern, rational thinking in the Navy. I feel that Z-gram policies have caused many officers to re-evaluate their thinking, policies, and direction toward a value-of-return philosophy.

(CDR) The ideas, or directions, are good, but the effect is distorted, often beyond recognition, in the administration of the Z-grams. As a result of this distortion, officers at the C.O. level are confused and inhibited. With all the initiative at the top, no options remain for lower echelons.

(CDR) I am very impressed by the Z-gram program. I was fortunate to spend two days with the Retention Study Group headquartered at the Center for Naval Analysis in Washington last year. I got to see the results of numerous study groups and to follow the research process on the majority of the ideas. No suggestion was taken lightly at any level, especially not at the CNO level. The Z-grams issued in the early stages received special attention because it was recognized that they may offend certain members of the command and executive community. With all the attention on semantics, there was still a large opposition to certain Z-grams specifically the one dealing with personal appearance. The biggest problem in the fleet came when senior officers and petty officers failed to see the spirit of the Z-grams and resented being dictated to. There is no doubt that the Z-gram Program has been a success.

(LT) As a C. O. I resented the complete rupture in the Chain of Command. Perhaps this was intentional, but I felt that it left a large amount of our Navy's middle management in a state of limbo until the actual intentions could be promulgated by Admiral Bagley in his after the fact briefings. It did catch everyone's attention.

(LT) I think that change is good, but the direction should be toward showing and showering our appreciation on the senior members of the Navy. There was a time when a CPO was a useful person. He now is written off in the Chief's Mess while some.....3rd class gets \$10,000 to ship over. (That chief must really be a dummy, he shipped for 20 years and only \$2000 - and not even a choice of coast) Boy are we dumb!

(LCDR) Many of those programs instituted by the Z-grams have been beneficial to the Navy and all in the Navy. There have, however, been some directed at benefiting only a select few at the expense of the Navy as a whole. The extreme permissiveness engendered in an attempt to increase first tour reenlistments is destroying Navy traditions, Espirit de Corps, and confidence in the Naval organization by the public. Commanding Officers responsibility is usurped at the highest level. Z-grams promulgate policy with little or no concern for how it affects the individual command. Commanding officers are neither incompetent nor unfeeling. Guidelines to C. O.'s not policy to the men is all that is needed. Show some of that special trust and confidence.

(LCDR) In general, I favor those Z-grams which have improved service functions, exchanges etc. However, I feel that the overall effect of the Z-grams has been to create a civilianized, 8-hour per day Navy. We are headed toward an extremely democratic service - with the only difference in rank being the pay scale. We are only reacting to polls, surveys, etc., when we should be exercising leadership at all levels. The pride of many of the career officers and senior enlisted personnel is suffering as a result. I feel that this is not the way to operate a military organization, and a general reduction in professionalism and operational competence will occur.

Editors Note: The other questions will be treated in future issues. The number of comments for or against the Z-grams quoted here are not to be taken as indicative of the frequency with which either opinion occurred in the group of questionnaires received.